



The President's Daily Brief

5 May 1970

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In Cambodia, the Communists continue their efforts to sever Phnom Penh's road links with the southern and eastern provinces. (*Page 1*)

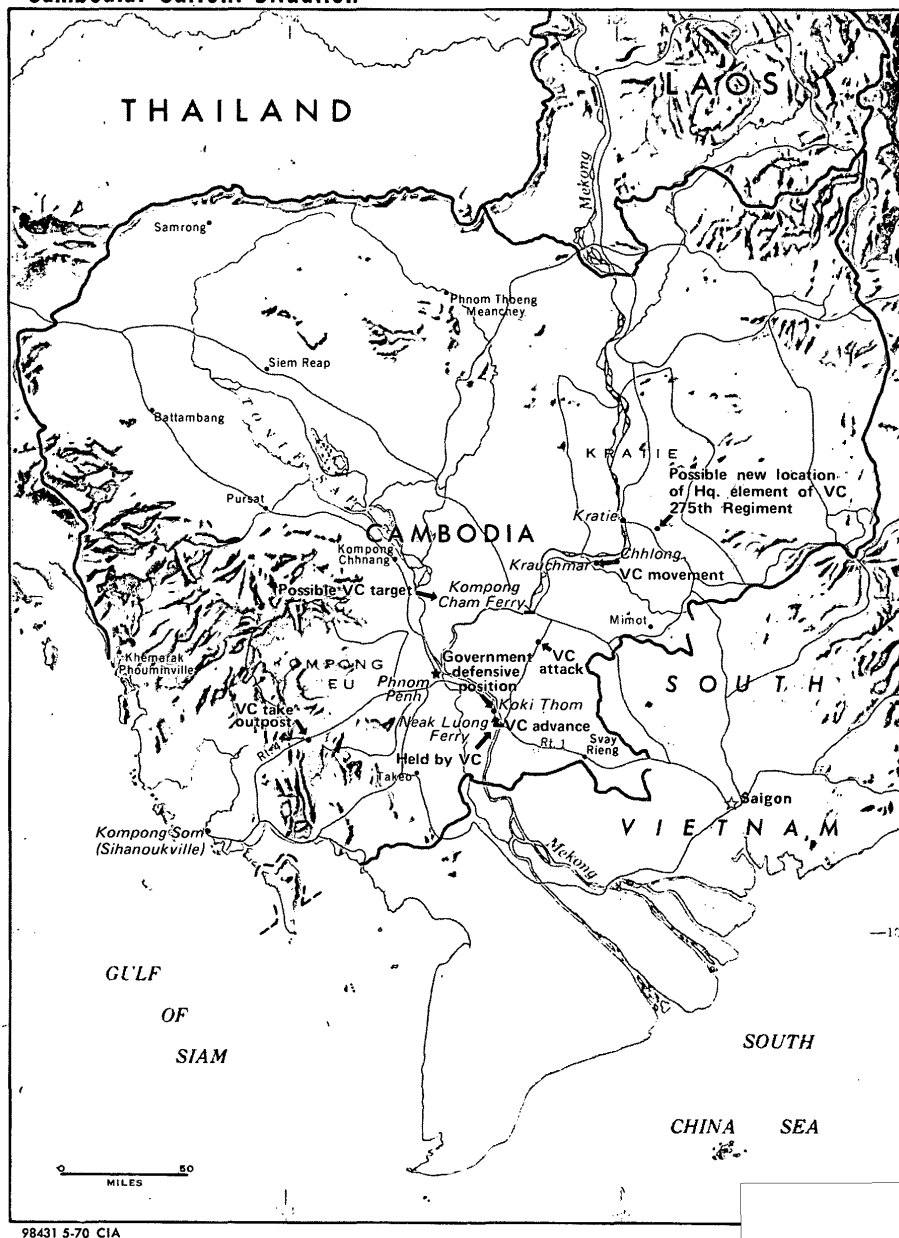
The current upsurge of enemy activity in South Vietnam could last at least through this week. (*Page 3*)

Both Moscow and Peking issued official statements yesterday on current US activity in Indochina. (*Page 4*)

The military situation in Laos is noted on *Page 5*.

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Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

By their latest moves the Communists have put themselves in a position to cut Phnom Penh's overland access to the southern and eastern provinces. An estimated 500 to 800 Communist troops who captured the important Mekong River ferry landing at Neak Luong, some 30 miles southeast of the capital, have now crossed to the west bank of the river. Cambodian troops evidently gave way without offering much resistance. A two-battalion government blocking force is located at the village of Koki Thom on Route 1, and an additional two battalions are moving to drive the Communists back across the river.

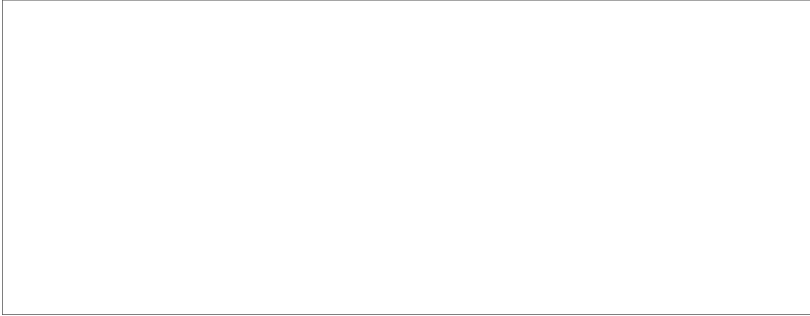
There are press reports, meanwhile, that the Communists may be preparing to attack another key Mekong crossing, this one near the city of Kompong Cham, 50 miles northeast of Phnom Penh. There is no reliable evidence of any major buildup in the area, but a government post ten miles south of Kompong Cham was attacked several days ago. This is the most westerly Communist penetration in this area to date. Farther up the river, intercepted Cambodian Army messages state that several truckloads of Communist troops have left the town of Chhlong and headed west for the town of Krauchmar, which is defended by a battalion of raw recruits.

Southwest of Phnom Penh, an army outpost has been lost near Route 4, the main road connecting Phnom Penh with the principal port at Kompong Som (Sihanoukville). If Route 4 is cut, the government would be faced with a critical logistic problem.

Yesterday, communications intelligence tentatively located the headquarters element of the Viet Cong 275th Regiment some 25 miles east of the town of Kratie. If confirmed, this relocation would mark the deepest penetration into Cambodia by a Communist main force unit since Sihanouk's ouster. It is not clear whether such a move would be a prelude to an attack on Kratie or an attempt to evade allied border operations.

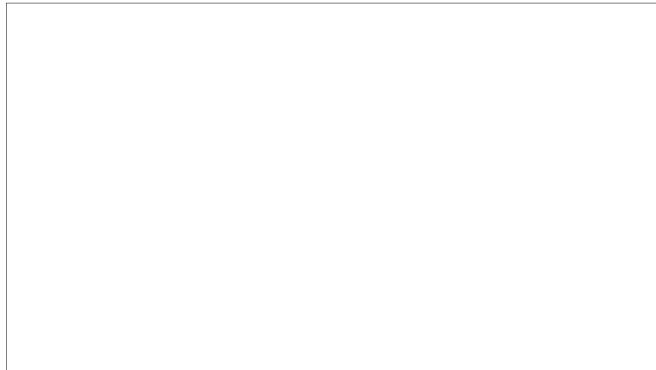
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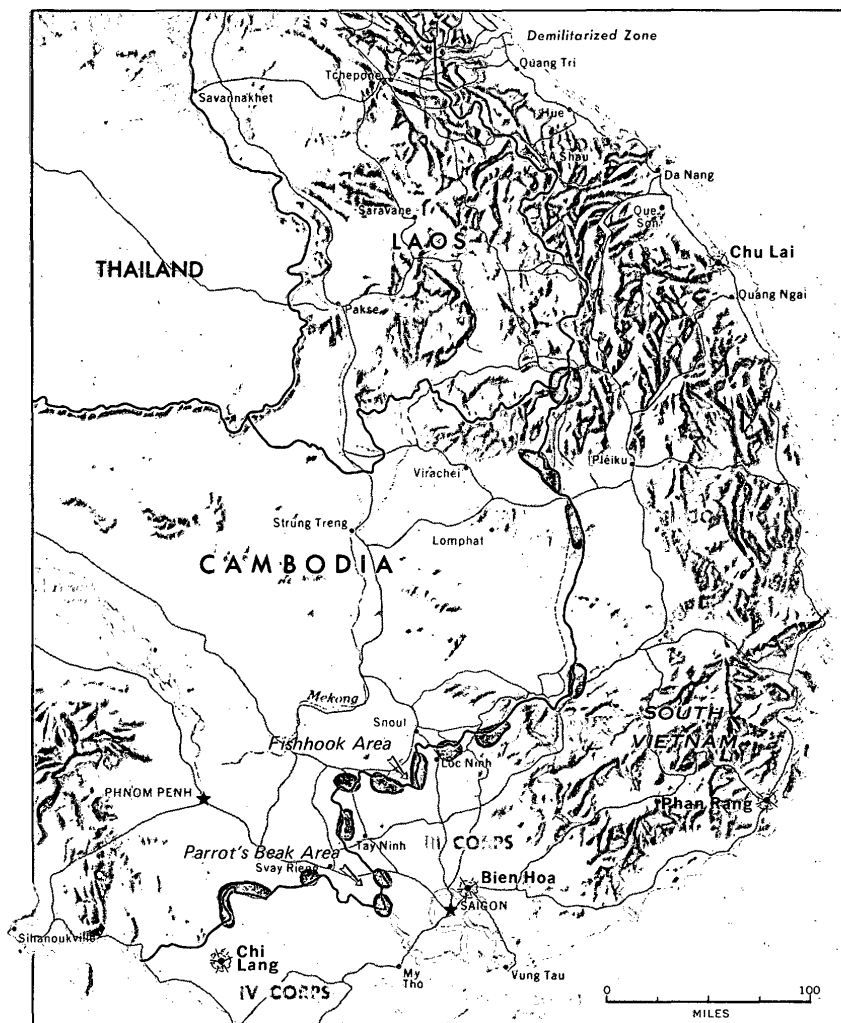
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Allied Military Facilities Hit by Rocket and Mortar Fire, 3-4 May



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VC/NVA base area along
Cambodian border

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SOUTH VIETNAM - CAMBODIA

The second phase of the Communists' spring campaign continued to gain momentum on 3-4 May. Allied military facilities, including US airbases at Chu Lai, Phan Rang, and Bien Hoa and the South Vietnamese training center at Chi Lang in the delta, were struck by rocket and mortar fire. Casualties and damage were generally light. Scattered South Vietnamese outposts also were targets of enemy shellings and small-scale ground attacks. The village of Que Son northwest of Chu Lai and four other district towns in the delta were hit by mortar rounds.

Enemy messages mention 7 and 8 May as dates for increased activity in I Corps, and at least two long-inactive North Vietnamese regiments there have shifted from secure mountain bases toward target areas in the populated lowlands. Numerous indications that some enemy units are still completing their combat preparations suggest that the present upsurge of activity--which has not been as intense as that of early April--could last at least through this week.

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USSR - COMMUNIST CHINA - INDOCHINA

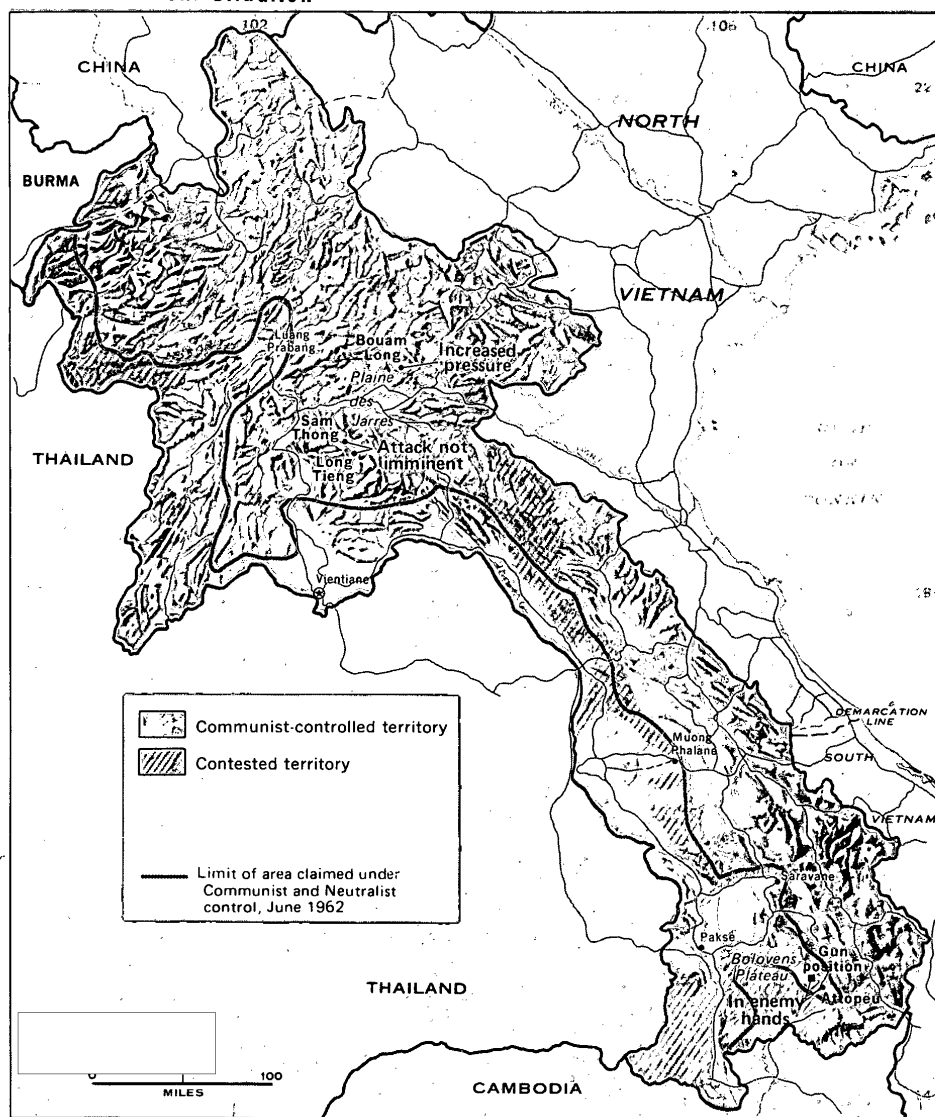
At his news conference in Moscow yesterday, Premier Kosygin claimed that a "new hotbed of war" had been created in Southeast Asia and accused President Nixon of "threats" against Hanoi and its allies. He denounced the US for "grossly violating" the agreement that led to the bombing halt, condemned US "intervention" in Cambodia, and suggested that these actions could have repercussions outside of Southeast Asia. Kosygin elaborated during the question and answer period by implying that US activity could jeopardize the strategic arms talks in Vienna. As for diplomatic means of solving Indochina problems, Kosygin said "this is not the time for meetings but for actions."

Peking's official statement yesterday contained a "stern warning" against US provocations and reiterated China's vague pledge to provide "powerful backing" for the Indochinese people in their "struggle" against the US.

Other than Moscow's reference to possible wider implications of US actions, neither statement goes beyond previous pledges of support for Hanoi or criticism of US policy. In answer to a question on Soviet military assistance, Kosygin replied merely that the USSR was already giving Hanoi "all-around" aid. Moreover, he refused to be drawn out on the question of the legitimacy of Cambodia's present government. Despite the bombast, the tenor of Peking's remarks was mild by Chinese standards.

Now that Moscow and Peking have issued authoritative statements, they probably will wait to see how the situation develops before considering a more active role in Indochina.

Laos: Current Situation



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NOTE

Laos: Intercepted messages show some increase in routine enemy maneuvering in the Long Tieng and Sam Thong area, but a new major attack does not appear imminent. The Communists also are increasing their pressure on Bouam Long, an isolated base north of the Plaine des Jarres, but the airstrip is still open. In the south, Attapeu and a nearby artillery position on the Bolovens Plateau remain in enemy hands. However, government forces have regained some observation posts in the area that fell to the enemy over the weekend.

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